Witney Meeting in Boo

THE DEFENCE

Of the PEOPLE called

QUAKERS:

BEING A

REPLY,

To a Book lately Published by certain *Priests* of the County of *Norfolk*, under the pretended Title of *The Quakers Challenge*.

And Containing,

Some Brief and Modest *Animadversions* upon the Book it self.

Several *Certificates*, which Detect the Errors in those of *West-Dereham*, and Clear the People called *Quakers* of the said *Challenge*.

The Letters that passed between Them and the *Priests*.

Mark 14. 10, 11.

And Judas Iscariot, *one of the Twelve, went unto the Chief Priests to betray him unto them.*

When they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him Money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

London, Printed and Sold by *T. Sowle*, in *White-Hart-Court* in *Gracious-street*, and at the *Bible* in *Leaden-Hall-street*, 1699.

Witney!

THE PREFACE.

Friendly Reader,

THIS was not the design of these Introductory Lines, to endeavour the Pre-possessing of thy Mind with more favourable Sentiments concerning Us, and our Cause, than what Truth and Justice may and do require: But to lay before thee plain Matter of Fact, by way of Preface, to our following Defence; to the End thou may'st see what steps our Adversaries have taken to draw us into this Controversie, what Provocations they have given us thus to appear, and the necessity of making this our Reply and Vindication Publick.

For tho' we are Represented by the Priests, *as the Stirrers up of Strife and Contention, and the Beginners of this Controversie; yet, by the following Account, we hope the contrary will appear, and that they themselves were the Authors thereof, assisted by* F. Bugg; *they having Challenged us in General Terms, and Charged us with* Blasphemy *against* God, *against* Christ, *and against the* Holy Scriptures, *&c. which we are not guilty of; and appointed us Time and Place,* viz. *on the 8th of* December, 1698. *in* West-Dereham Church (*so called*) *Then and There to hear the said Charge proved against us; and several Letters passed between Them and Us relating thereunto; wherein we Demanded a* Copy of their Charge; *namely,* the Authors Names, Titles of the Books, and Pages, *which we thought Just and Reasonable for them to give us, because they pretended to Charge us out of our* Friends Books, *that if the Authors were Living they might Explain for themselves; or if Dead, we might have time to make due Preparation for our selves.*

And their Unfairness was such, that we could not prevail with them, but that they were resolved to proceed, whether we would meet them or no, upon their own Terms; that is, without giving us the Particulars of their Charge: We judged it needful to make our Appearance at the Time and Place by them appointed, not to Comply with their Challenge, upon the Measures *which they had fixed; but to*

insist

insist upon our former Demand, in the face of all the People then and there Assembled; and in Case of Refusal, to except against their Proceedings, as Unjust and Unreasonable; which we accordingly did. But notwithstanding our Endeavours both by Sober Reasoning, and Earnest Intreaties, they still positively denied us.

This we thought was very hard Dealing, from those who would be accounted Ministers of Christ; *but our Wills being Resigned to the Will of God, whose we are, and whom we serve; we concluded to be as Quiet, and Patiently to bear our Burden; not in the least intending to Print a* Narrative *of what passed between Them and Us: And the more especially, because, at the End of the Meeting, some of the* Priests *were heard to say,* Now we have done with the Quakers. *And one of the* Quakers *desired to know when they would meet again; the* Priests *answered,* Let it end here.

But these appeared to be Words of Course, and not of Reality, as the Sequel soon demonstrated: For quickly after came forth, in the Printed News, *a very Partial and Erroneous Account of the* West-Dereham *Conference, which we were willing to Hope, was not done by the Direction or Consent of any of the* Priests *that were concerned therein: But our Hopes were soon frustrated; for in another* News Paper, *soon after that, it was affirmed to be done by their Approbation; and then came forth their* Printed Relation, *falsly called,* The Quakers Challenge, *with several of their own Names to it, and some other Persons. In which, as we conceive, are many Falsehoods, undue Reflections and Insinuations contained.*

And for Proof hereof, we intreat the Perusal of this ensuing Reply, For the Manifesting of Truth, and Clearing Us, and for the Undeceiving those that have been, or may be, misled by that untrue Relation, which is Attested by some Persons of Note, whom we believe were the more easily perswaded to Subscribe it, because they had not a Right Understanding, who were the Aggressors *and* Fomenters *of the* Controversie, *and the* Priests *further* Design *against us, who are their Peaceable Neighbours, and*

True Friends,

Richard Ashby, John Piddeman,
Thomas Bonnet, Daniel Phillips,
John Hubbard, Tho. Buckingham.

Some

Some Brief and Modeſt

ANIMADVERSIONS

UPON THE

Norfolk Prieſts Relation of the *Weſt-Dereham Conference.*

Relation, p. 1. 'Some *Quakers* in the County of *Nor-*
'*folk* having, by a Letter, Challenged the *Clergy* of
'the *Church* of *England*, Time and Place (leave
'from our Superiours firſt obtained) were at length
'fixed.

Animadverſion, This is precariouſly Aſſerted by the *Prieſts*, and therefore lies upon them yet to prove; for it is not their Prefixing an undue Title to our *firſt Letter*, and then calling it by the Name of the *Quakers Challenge*, that will make it ſo. If they had owned themſelves the *firſt Challengers* of the *Quakers*, they had done themſelves Juſtice, and the World too; whom they have Impos'd upon, by that Fictitious Frontis-piece. For we did in our *Letters* to them, and do hereby deny both to them, and all that ſhall read our *Defence*, that we were the *Aggreſſors* and firſt Challengers. And for the clearing our Innocency in this Matter, we have herewith cauſed *Certificates* to be Printed; which we conceive, will fully Evince, and Manifeſt that the *Aggreſſion* lay at their own Doors, and their Mercenary Agent and Accomplice *F. Bugg*'s.

And had thoſe, whom they ſtile their Superiours, had a right Information hereof, and alſo of their *Taunting* at us, and Daringly Saying, That if we came not at their *Summons*, it ſhould be *a Token of our Inſincerity and Cowardiſe for ever*; we are Charitably Perſwaded, they would not ſo far have Countenanced theſe *Prieſts*, as they ſuggeſt they have.

And whereas they ſay, *Time and Place were at length fixed*; they ought alſo to have told, who fixed them; for that was their own Act. But this they have concealed here, to blind the Reader, and hide their own Forwardneſs. However *their Letter*, dated the 27th of *October*, 1698. is an undeniable Witneſs againſt them, as to the fixing of *Time* and *Place*; and though we told them *in our Letter* on the 23d of the 9th Month following, 'Seeing you reſolutely Refuſe our Juſt Demand (viz. *of a Copy of their Charge*) 'we do not look upon our 'ſelves obliged to meet you under the Limitation of *your* 'Terms: Yet they proceeded according to what they wrote *in their Letter*, dated the 16th of *November*, in theſe words, 'Pray trouble us no more with your Let-'ters, for our Meaſures are fix'd, and you may chuſe 'whether you will meet us upon the Terms reſolved upon 'or no.

Rel. p. 1. 'And our Charge, according to their deſire, 'ſent to them, as appears by our firſt Letter.

Animad. They ſent us a Charge indeed, but not according to our Deſire; for we Deſired a Particular of *the Blaſphemies* they Charged us with, together with the *Authors Names, Titles of the Books, and Pages*, as may be ſeen by the Three laſt of our *Letters*: But this they conſtantly Denied us. In our *firſt Letter*, we were not ſo expreſs as we were afterwards, when we ſaw in what *General Terms* they Charged us; but we Thought, it had been enough

to

to let them know our Freedom to take their Charge, and ſtand a Publick Trial, *deſiring only the Common Priviledges to ſuch Occaſions belonging.* Now what are theſe Common Priviledges, but a Particular of *their Charge*, with *Author, Title, Book and Page*; conſidering, they told us in their *Letter* dated the 3*d.* of *November*, 1698. *We intend to Charge you with Blaſphemy out of your own Books.*

Rel. p. 1. 'And on the day appointed, *viz. December* 'the 8*th.* 1698. the *Quakers* and *We* met in *Weſt-Dereham-* 'Church, in the County aforeſaid, and took our Places 'before prepared. We firſt read the Service of the Day, 'near the Beginning of which, they coming in ſtaid it out, 'not to joyn in the Duty, but rather to affront it, carrying 'themſelves Irreverently all the Time.

Animad. 'Tis true, We met them on the 8*th.* of the 10*th.* Month, 1698. in *Weſt-Dereham Steeple-Houſe*; but We neither appointed the *Day*, nor the *Place*, nor agreed to their *Terms*; for we looked upon their *Terms* as Unreaſonable. And therefore our Appearing there, was, not to joyn Iſſue with them, and to Anſwer their pretended Charge; but to demand at this *Meeting*, what we had ſo often in our Letters Inſiſted upon before, and they had Refuſed us, namely, *a Copy of their Charge*; and to acquaint the People, whom the *Prieſts* had Miſinformed, that we were not the *firſt Challengers.*

Our coming in while they were at their Service, was by the Direction of their *Warden* and a *Watch-man*, ſent, as we Suppoſe, for that Purpoſe. And when we were come in, tho' we did not joyn with them; yet we offered no Affront, nor carried our ſelves Irreverently, unleſs a *Silent and Serious Deportment* all the Time of their Service, may bring us under that Imputation.

Rel. p. 2. ' As ſoon as *our Service* was ended, one of ' *their Speakers* began to Pray; whereupon all of them ' immediatly pulled off their Hats, and carried themſelves ' as at a Religious Worſhip.

Animad. We hope that was no Offence, and if they could ſay in Truth, they were for that Time, *Sober and Quiet*, as we were during *their Service*, as they rightly call it; we think it would have been more to their Reputation, than to Cry out, *A Conventicle, a Conventicle* (a Thing ſtrange to hear of in a *Steeple-Houſe*) while our *Friend* was on his knees Praying to Almighty God; as if there was a Law againſt Praying to Him, which we know nothing of, and beſides it's Allowed by their *Liturgy*.

Rel. p. 1. ' We inſiſted that they were *our Challengers*, ' and repeated to them their own *Letter of Challenge*; ' They told us, they were provoked by certain Carriages ' of ours to write that Letter.

Animad. True it is, we did, and do deny, that we were the *Aggreſſors and firſt Challengers*, and we Proffered ſeveral *Teſtimonies* to Clear up that Matter; but being then Obſtructed by our *Adverſaries*, We have now Printed them, and leave the Judgment and Deciſion thereof to the Impartial.

Rel. p. 1, 2. ' And after many long Harangues of ſeveral of *their Speakers*, they deſired that all *the Letters* ' which paſſed between us might be read to the Auditory; ' not as if they could get any Advantage by reading them, ' but as appeared to us afterwards, meerly to divert us an ' Hour or more from proſecuting *our Charge*.

Animad. It was very reaſonable *the Letters* ſhould be read, that the People might underſtand; *Firſt*, that they were the *firſt Challengers and Chargers*; which they now grant by Complaining, they were Diverted from proſecuting *their Charge*. *Secondly*, That we had ſeveral Times Requeſted

Requeſted the *Authors Names, the Titles and Pages of the Books*; out of which they did intend to Charge us, that we might have been duly Prepared to Meet them, and Give proper Anſwers to *their ſeveral Charges:* For there is a common Juſtice due to every Man, that he ſhould have the Liberty to Explain his own Words; and if the Author was Dead, or could not be there, that his Meaning by other Words or Sentences relating to the ſame Subject might be Explained; and if they could not, then it was Time enough to Diſown thoſe Words and Sentences, but not without due Examination; for otherwiſe we ſhould be Unjuſt to our Friends, and Injurious to our Selves.

Rel. p. 2. 'We anſwered, we had Law and Equity a-'gainſt ſuch an Unreaſonable Demand: We told them the 'Law was their own, 'twas from *Edward Burroughs*, who 'was a Son of Thunder, and ſpoke all from the Mouth of 'the Lord, whoſe Book uſed to be with them, of as much 'Authority, as the *Bible*.

Animad. Our Demand was, a more Particular Account than a General Charge. But was this Unreaſonable? Or is there either Law or Equity that forbids it? We know of none that doth; but do Conceive, we have both on our Side. Their Allegation out of *Edward Burroughs* doth not reach the *Caſe*, nor could his Authority Settle the Preliminaries of the *Conference*: For he hath been dead about 35 Years, and this was Publiſhed about 5 Years before that; therefore what is a Challenge of near 40 Years Standing, and by a *Friend*, ſo long ſince dead, to us? Is it Reaſonable that that ſhould Affect us, and Set us ſuch Meaſures as theſe *Partial Judges* Pitch'd and Reſolv'd upon? Beſides *E. B.* tho' he made an ample Offer to *the Prieſts* of that Day, ſaying, *Let them appoint Time, Place, and proffer Terms at their own Pleaſure:* Yet he did not thereby Oblige us by any Expreſs Word or Conſequence.

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That he was *Boanerges*, or, a Son of Thunder, and did Speak from the Mouth of the Lord, we humbly Acknowledge; and Bleſs God for Raiſing up and Sending forth ſo Eminent and Able an Inſtrument, to Preach the *Everlaſting Goſpel*. His Memory is Precious among Us, and his Books of Eſteem; but not of Equal Authority with *the Bible*. For though, he had received a Meaſure of the ſame Spirit, which was in the *Holy Pen-men*; yet *Diſpenſations* Vary according to the manifold Wiſdom of God; and therefore we prefer the *Bible* before *E. B*'s Books, and all other Writings Extant whatſoever.

We do not Plead for any *New Goſpel, Faith, or Doctrine*, different from that which Chriſt, and his Holy Prophets and Apoſtles taught, and is Recorded in the *Scriptures of Truth*; but for the Revelation of that, which they Taught, and is therein Recorded. Wherefore as the Apoſtle ſays; *There are diverſities of Gifts, but the ſame Spirit; and there are differences of Adminiſtrations, but the ſame Lord; and there are diverſities of Operations, but it is the ſame God which worketh all in all: But the Manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal*, 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6, 7. So ſay we, *viz.* That there is a Meaſure of the ſame Spirit in us, which was in the Holy Prophets and Apoſtles; ſo that 'tis not an *Equality* of any Writings with theirs, but a *Meaſure* of the ſame Spirit of Revelation which they had, that we Contend for.

Rel. p. 3. 'For the nature of the *Blaſphemy* we Charge 'them with, ſhould be ſo Plain and Obvious, that every 'Chriſtian ſhall be able to Underſtand it, to be ſo upon the 'Reading it to them.

Animad. If the Nature of the *Blaſphemy* be ſo Plain and Obvious, as theſe Men pretend; why did they Refuſe at the *Conference*, to give us a Particular Account of it? For their Charging us with *Blaſphemy* of ſo Plain a Nature, and

yet

yet Denying us *a Copy*, after *ſo many Demands*, gives us juſt Cauſe to Suſpect they are Conſcious of the Invalidity of their *Proofs*, and therefore of the *Charge* it ſelf; but that *Envy* link'd with *Intereſt*, Prompts them to *Calumniate Loudly*; that Some might be Frighted from Coming near us, and Others Irritated to *Hate, Malign and Perſecute us.*

Rel. p. 3. 'But ſhould we tell them the Names of *our* 'Books, *Page and Line* before-hand, we had deſerv'd ra-'ther to be *laghed at as Fools*, than *looked on as Diſputants*; 'for this would be to ſend them our Arguments before the 'Diſputation.

Animad. Here they make a Poor Excuſe for Denying our Juſt Demands, and then give as Weak a Reaſon for it. But has the Hiding the Names of their *Books, Page and Line* from us, Secured their Reputation among *Men of Wiſdom?* Or only got them the *blind Applauſes of the Ignorant?* We know that Juſtice and True Wiſdom are Inſeparable; and therefore, ſeeing they have Poſitively Refuſed us *Juſtice*, their Ambition of being accounted *Diſputants*, when they themſelves know, *'twas no Diſputation*; as it cannot Cover them from the Imputation of *Folly*, ſo can it not Acquit them of the Guilt of *Injuſtice.*

Did ever Men Apologize to leſs Advantage than theſe have done? We never deſired their *Arguments*, but their *Quotations*, that we might know where to find the *Blaſphemies* (if any Such there were in *our Friends Books*) and make Preparation for *our Anſwer*: And ye there they talk of *their Arguments*, as though we Solicited for them before hand: For we told them, they might Reſerve *their Arguments* till they Needed them, and yet might Reaſonably Give us the *Quotations*, they Pretended to Argue upon.

That

That they had a great Mind to be looked on as *Diſputants*, and were willing to ſeem furniſhed with Arguments, to prove *their Charge*, we do not Deny; if *Clamourous Harangues*, and *Tricking Attempts*, be any Evidence of it: For they would Fain have Drawn us into this Snare, *namely*, To have Condemned our Friends of Blaſphemy, before we had Examined what *that* was, which they *Called* ſo. Which Vain Effort, whether it Proclaims their *Folly*, or Speaks their *Honeſty and Fairneſs* in Arguing, the Impartial Reader, though but of a Common Capacity, may eaſily Determine.

Prieſt *Archer* of *Milden-Hall* confeſſed indeed, that the *Quakers of this Generation were Orthodox*; and the Confeſſion of an *Adverſary* is very conſiderable: But he would have had us Condemn our Friends *Books*, before we either Heard, or Saw, or Knew, that there was any *Blaſphemy* in them. But we conceive, it would have been as unjuſt in us, to have Condemned the Evidence before we Heard them; as it was, and is, in our *Enemies* to Conceal them from us.

Rel. p. 4. 'We told them, the Evidence we ſhould bring 'was not from *Ours*, but from their *Own Books*; and it 'was not fit we ſhould tell them the Names of our Wit-'neſſes before hand, that they might have time to tamper 'with them, and make them ſpeak what they never in-'tended.

Animad. It Looks, as if theſe Men were ſomewhat *Confuſed*; for in p. 3. they ſay, *Our Books, Page and Line*; here forgetting what they Said but ſix Lines before, they ſay, *Not from Ours*, but from their *Own Books*.

Again, how Looſely and Idly do they Diſcourſe in the latter Part of this Paragraph, about *our Tampering with their Witneſſes?* Was it poſſible for us *to Tamper*, as they Phraſe

Phraſe it, with them, *viz.* Printed Books, which were in their own Hands, and in the Hands of many Others? Or could we make them Speak otherwiſe than they do? Surely, the Weakneſs of this Argument, as well as the Diſparity between *Books* and *Men*, ſhews little Wiſdom in theſe *Learned Rectors*, and rather beſpeaks their Shortneſs, than their Sharpneſs.

Rel. p. 4. 'When a Time of Diſputation with an Ad-'verſary is ſet, and I have ſent him the *Queſtions* to be 'Diſputed on; was it ever expected that I ſhould before 'the Time ſend him all my Proofs? The *Queſtion* you 'know betwixt us is, whether they are Blaſphemers or no?

Animad. Here is another *Blunder*, hardly tolerable in any, but in ſuch Diſputants. Sometimes 'tis *I*, ſometimes 'tis *We* or *Us*, *Singular* and *Plural*, *One* and *More*, as their Fancy leads them. But leaving this Confuſed Variation of Numbers, let us Attend to what they ſay next; 'The Queſtion (ſay they) you know betwixt us is, whe-'ther they are *Blaſphemers* or no? This is another *Effluvium* from a cloudy Intellect. They never, till now, put it in the Form of a Quſtion, whether we were *Blaſphemers* or no? But Charg'd us with Expreſs and Down-right *Blaſphemy*. Therefore they are gone from their former *Mode* of Expreſſion, and have brought it now to Terms of a Diſputable Nature.

Rel. p. 4. 'Preſently they cry'd out, We Reproach the 'Parliament, who have owned them to be Diſſenting Pro-'teſtants, whilſt we would prove them to be *Blaſphemers*; 'and indeed they did ſtrut exceedingly for the Honour 'the Parliament hath done them, to Recognize them as 'Proteſtants, as if under the Protection of the Act of Par-'liament, they might Blaſpheme *(cum Privilegio)* and no 'Body muſt be ſo bold as to ask them, Why do 'you ſo?

Animad. We Received not our Religion of Man, nor were we Taught it after a Traditional Manner, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ, whom the *Lord God hath laid in* Zion *for a sure Foundation*, Isa. 28. 16. Even *the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*, Eph. 2. 20. and of all the Righteous in every Generation. And He that is our Foundation, the same is our Defence and Protection: For he is our King, the Lord God Omnipotent, and the Head of the true *Church, which is in God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 Thess. 1. 1. and against which *the Gates of Hell shall never be able to prevail*, Mat. 16. 18. As we Received not our Religion from Man, so Man cannot Continue it to us, nor Take it from us. Yet we did and do Gratefully Acknowledge the *Favour of the Government*, and do Desire to Bless Almighty God for it, *by whom Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice*, Prov. 8. 15. And so far were we from Abusing this Favour, that we Commended the Reason they Assigned for it, namely, **The Uniting of the King's Protestant Subjects in Interest and Affection**, and Earnestly Pressed the Prosecution of it: For we Heartily Desire the Well-fare of our Country, and Actually Endeavour it, according to what we have Received, wheresoever our Lot is Providentially Cast.

But it never was in our Hearts to conceive, that we had thereby **a Privilege to Blaspheme God, or Contemn Authority**, though these *Priests* have Misrepresented us, both to our *Neighbours*, and the *Nation*, to be Persons that *Blaspheme* under the Protection of an Act of Parliament. O Unchristian Practice! Are these the Teachers of the People? Are these Ministers of Christ? If the Tree is to be known by its Fruit, their Works do apparently Discover that they are not.

As to the Demeaning our Selves under the *Government*, We Hope, *We have had our Conversation Honest in the sight*

Sight of all Men, and have led quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godlineſs and Honeſty: Not only Doing unto others, what we would have them Do unto us; but we have Patiently Born many *Injuries*, and Undergone great *Sufferings* for Truth and Righteouſneſs ſake. And in this Temper and Evenneſs of Spirit, have we been Preſerved by the Power of our God, under *All*, and through *All our Exerciſes*, to this *very Day:* And we have not only a Teſtimony in our Selves, but many *Witneſſes* without us, how contrary to that *Strutting Carriage*, our *Adverſaries* falſly Speak of, we Behaved our ſelves at this *Conference*.

Rel. p. 4. 'They told us, we are going about moſt un-'charitably to Damn them all.

Animad. And ſo they were; but that neither was nor is in their Power to do; *Thanks be to God through our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* They have indeed Invaded the *Regal Power of Chriſt*, and Taken upon them to *Bind and Looſe*, as though they were the Succeſſors of *Peter*; but wherein do they truly Succeed him? Is it not rather in Denying of his Maſter, than in Owning of him? For they neither Follow him in *Faith*, *Doctrine*, *Humility*, *Patience*, nor in any other *Characters* of that Penitent and Self-denying Apoſtle and Miniſter of Chriſt.

Rel. p. 4. We told them, they may Repent of their 'Blaſphemies, and be ſaved: For *Paul* was once one of 'their Companions in Blaſpheming the Name of Jeſus 'Chriſt.

Animad. We replied, That ever ſince we have been a People Gathered by the Power and Spirit of God, we have ſincerely Believed, and do ſtill Believe, *in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, as the holy Scriptures do Declare of him; and do not only plainly Say, but alſo firmly Believe, That *there is no other Name given under Heaven whereby Man can be ſaved*; neither is there *Salvation in any other Name:* And this we hope is no *Blaſphemy*.

Whereas they ſay, Paul *was once One of our Companions in Blaſpheming the Name of Jeſus Chriſt.* We Abſolutely Deny, that ever we *Blaſphemed* that Sacred Name, *whereby we are called*; and which we Put our whole Truſt and Confidence in, and Prefer *above every other Name.* And if they mean by *Paul*, the Apoſtle *Paul*; they have ſhewn great Ignorance, in not Diſtinguiſhing between *Saul* the Phariſee, and *Paul* the Apoſtle. While he went under the *Firſt Denomination*, he was a *Blaſphemer*, and not under the *Second.* For waving the Conjectures of others, about his having two Names at his Circumciſion, *Saul* a Jewiſh, and *Paul* a Roman Name: We never Read in all the Holy Scriptures, that he was called *Paul* till after his Converſion, ſee *Acts* 13. 9. where 'tis ſaid, *He was filled with the Holy Ghoſt*; and then ſurely no *Blaſphemer.*

So that their *Simile*, though Deſigned to our Reproach, Tends greatly to our Honour. *Paul* the Apoſtle is our Companion in the Faith and Patience of *Jeſus Chriſt*; but not *Saul* the Perſecutor and Blaſphemer.

Rel. p. 5. 'They told us, Blaſphemy againſt God, was 'the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe the Holy Ghoſt 'was God: We told them, we were Sorry it was ſo for 'their ſakes; but for their Comfort, we hope for to make 'it Appear, it was not that Unpardonable Sin: So from 'the 12*th* of St. *Matthew* we explained to them the Na-'ture of that Sin, and ſo Stop'd their Mouths.

Animad. They hoped to make it Appear, That *Blaſphemy againſt God was not that Unpardonable Sin*, mentioned in the 12th of *Matthew*, but have not done it; neither have they Defined that unpardonable Sin, or Proved, that Blaſphemy againſt God is not *Blaſphemy* againſt the *Holy Ghoſt.*

If they had explained to us the Nature of that Sin, they ſhould firſt have given the *Etymology*, and Proper Signi-

Signification of the word *Blaſphemy*; for how ſhould the People Underſtand, what *Blaſphemy* againſt the *Holy Ghoſt* is, before they are Informed what *Blaſphemy* it ſelf Signifieth? So that not Acquainting the People with the proper Senſe of the Word, they were *Barbarians* to the Major Part of the Auditory, and fill'd their Ears only with Frightful and Unintelligible Sounds. 'Twill therefore be Convenient, ſince theſe *Learned Rectors* have not done it, to Explain the word *Blaſphemy*, and make it Obvious to the Capacity and Underſtanding of the People.

The Word then is of *Greek* Original, Βλασφημία, *Blaſphemy*; often rendered ſo by our Tranſlators. *Lexicographers* generally Derive it from Βλαπτειν τὴν φήμην, that is, to *Calumniate*, *Speak Evil*, or *Reproach the good Name of another*. And this according to *Beza*, in his *Notes* upon *Mat.* 9. 3. is the common Acceptation of it among the more Elegant *Greek Writers*. *Blaſphemy* then in True and Proper Engliſh is *Evil-Speaking*; and ſo 'tis Tranſlated, *Eph.* 4. 31. *Let all Bitterneſs, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour,* (Καὶ Βλασφημία) *and Evil-ſpeaking, be put away from you, with all Malice.*

And having given the genuine Senſe of the Word, we will in the next Place, for the Benefit both of *Prieſts* and *People*, Acquaint them with what their own Church ſays of *Evil-ſpeaking* againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*: They may find it in *Anthony Sparrow*'s *Collection of Articles*, &c. p. 44. and it is this, 'Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt is, when a 'Man of Malice, and Stubbornneſs of Mind, doth rail 'upon the Truth of God's Word manifeſtly perceived 'and being Enemy thereto, Perſecuteth the ſame. 'Tis the 17*th* of the *Articles* agreed upon by the Biſhops and others in the *Convocation* at *London*, in the Year 1552. and Publiſhed by the Authority of King *Edward* VI. in the Year 1553. We do not ſay, That we Agree to this Definition,

tion; but it being the Account their *Convocation* gives of it we conceive the *Prieſts* ſhould either Own it; or Reject that *Article* made in the Year 1562. by another *Convocation*, which declares, *The Church hath Authority in Controverſies of Faith.* If they will own it, then whether the Sin againſt God be the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt or no? We do not ſee how they can Quit themſelves of the *Blaſphemy* the *Article* ſpeaks of. For do they not of Malice Rail upon the Truth of God's Word manifeſtly perceived, and as Enemies thereunto Perſecute the ſame, in Charging ſo many *Blaſphemies* upon the *Light within*, as taught by the *Quakers?* For the *Light within* is *Chriſt*, and *Chriſt* is the *Truth of God's Word, The Way, the Truth, and the Life*, John 14. 6. *The Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God*, Chap. 1. 1. The Sum and Subſtance of the Goſpel, and that which the Holy Scriptures give Teſtimony of, and we Believe and Teach.

But whether the *Blaſphemy* againſt the *Holy Ghoſt* be Unpardonable, we ſhall not Determine: A great Doctor of their own Communion was of the Opinion, it was not; ſee *Hammond*'s *Annot.* upon *Mat.* 12.

If they Print again, we intreat them to be Plain and Open, and not Talk great Words in the Dark, to Endeavour to Fright People, and to Exaſperate them againſt us without any juſt Cauſe or Provocation.

Rel. p. 5. 'And now we began to Charge them with 'Blaſphemy againſt God.

Animad. Whom did they begin to Charge? Not the *Quakers* of this preſent Generation, for they were then acknowledged *Orthodox*; and yet at firſt, all were by them Charged to be *Blaſphemers*; ſee their Contradiction.

Rel. p. 5. 'And as ſoon as we began to proſecute our 'Charge, one gets upon a Form, and Bawls aloud to the 'People, *&c.*

Animad.

Animad. It's true, one got up on a Form, and made a Solemn Confeſſion of Faith in Scripture-Terms; yet did not Bawl, but in words of Sobriety Declared to this Effect,

We Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and in Jeſus Chriſt his only Begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour, who was Born of the Virgin Mary *(whom the Holy Ghoſt overſhadowed) who appeared in the World in that Body prepared for him; who died for our Sins, and roſe again for our Juſtification. And we Believe in the Holy Spirit, and own the Three that bear Record in Heaven, and that theſe Three are One. We Own the Holy Scriptures of Truth, and Believe they were given forth by Divine Inſpiration, and that they are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, and are able to make the Man of God wiſe to Salvation, through Faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus. And We Eſteem the Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Teſtament, to be the beſt Book in all the World, and could be glad that People did ſpend more of their time in Reading of them. And the Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt, his* Baptiſm *and* Supper, *according to the Holy Scriptures; and that we neither Preach, Teach, nor Believe in any other Light than the* Life *of that* Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God: *And therefore this Light, as taught by us, could not expoſe us to Error or Blaſphemy.*

And we own Magiſtracy to be the Ordinance of God, for the Puniſhment of Evil-doers, and Praiſe of them that do well.

Rel. p. 5. 'This Diſorder hindred us from Proſecuting 'our deſign to any Purpoſe; tho' we permitted every one 'of them from *London*, or from *Rome*, if they pleaſed, to 'have free Liberty to Diſpute, if they will do it fairly, 'without Noiſe or Clamour.

Animad. Whatever their Deſign was, it ſeems they did not Proſecute it to any Purpoſe: But what an unjuſt and unkind

unkind Inſinuation is this, *from* London *or* Rome? As tho' we had *Romiſh Emiſſaries* among us; who, Bleſſed be our God, do equally Renounce all the *Corrupt Doctrines, Anti-Chriſtian Spirit, Lord-like Power and Grandeur, Idolatrous Worſhip, Superſtitious Ceremonies, and Wicked Practices*, both of *Pope*, and all *Others*, who Perſecute for Religion and Conſcience towards God, it being Romiſh. And this we Teſtifie and Declare, that Whoever they are that promote Perſecution, upon any Pretence whatſoever, they are Friends to *Rome*, and not to *England*, being *Profeſt Enemies to Chriſtian Liberty and Property, and Publick Diſturbers of the Peace of their Native Country.*

Rel. p. 5. 'And whereas we brought a great Number 'of the *Quakers* Books, both Old and New, and all of 'them of their moſt Celebrated Authors, they cried no 'Books, no Arguments; which occaſioned great Laughter 'andShouting among the People.

Animad. Who ſaid ſo? We would willingly have diſcourſed upon *Books Regularly*, but when we demanded a Copy of *their Charge*, which was but Juſtice; then the *Managers of the Conference*, who ſhould have been *Examples* to the People, of *Gravity and Soberneſs*, did turn it off to *Laughter and Shouting*, with a *Company of vain Perſons* there preſent, to Joyn them therein.

Rel. p. 6. 'And ever and anon they would have been 'Charging us Inſolently, urging us to prove our ſelves 'Chriſtians.

Animad. They gave us great Occaſion to Queſtion their *Chriſtianity*, by reaſon of their *frequent Hiſſing and Hollowing*, which made us take Notice of it to the Auditory, that they might Obſerve *what Fruits* ſome of them brought forth.

Rel. p. 6. 'And by and By we muſt prove our ſelves 'Miniſters of Chriſt, which was anſwered.

Animad.

Animad. We do not remember that any of them did: but if they did, Why did not they Infert it here, that we might have seen it? They gave the Occasion by their frequent Examining our Friends; whereupon One of them said, *If they would prove themselves Ministers of Christ, he would be Catechized by them*; but they Declined the Proof of that; and when one in the Pulpit made an Essay towards it, they discountenanced him, saying, He was a *Young Man, and not concerned with them in this Affair*, or to that Effect; yet we Acknowledge, he Behaved himself more gravely then most of them.

Rel. p. 6. 'And it was a Cunning Design of theirs, to 'divert us from our Charge, so much dreaded by them.

Animad. It rather seems they were upon Cunning Designs, and afraid to give their Charge, than that we were afraid to take it: For we offered to pay for the Writing, if we might have had it; and once we had a promise from Dr. *Beckham*, but were afterward denied by Rector *Meriton*.

Now, being thus imposed upon, and denied just *Measures*, we told the Auditory; that seeing these Persons had refused us Justice; we *Appealed to the Lord of Heaven and Earth, the Judge of All*, and in *His Name and Fear*, we made our Confession of Faith in Opposition to their Charges; and then some of them *Laughed, Hissed* and *Hollowed*, and one of them called for the *Stocks*, and a *Watch-man* came near the Scaffold, which we were upon, and held up his *Bill* at us: And they appearing with such seeming Threatning and Violence, and we could not be heard; some of our Friends took Occasion to disperse certain *Books*, called, *The Christianity of the People called* Quakers *Asserted*, &c. among the People, that they might speak for us. And whereas it was Suggested, that the *Book* being without a Name, it was to serve a Turn, and might be denyed afterwards.

Now We do Declare, That *Book* was first Printed in the Year 1689. in Behalf of the said People, and given to the *Parliament*, and since Reprinted; to serve no other Turn but *Truth*, and to shew in brief, what we Own and Hold concerning the things mentioned therein; and that they are not Contrary, but in all respects Agreeable to the *Holy Scriptures*.

And as to their Resolution, of not leaving the Matter thus, and Intention of Proving *their Charge*, at a more Favourable Opportunity, *viz. When the Days are long, and the Weather good*; as also, their **Permitting** any of Us to Appear, and Signifying how Civilly they will Treat Us, *viz. By Taking us by the Hands, and leading us out of Doors*, We think not to take much notice of it; but Commit our Cause to the Lord; who knows our Innocency, to whose Will we are Resigned, and in whom we Trust, that he will Defend us from their Evil Designs, Threatned and Attempted against us.

Rel. p. 6, 7. 'It being near the Evening, one of their 'Speakers made mention of our Lord Bishop's Name, and 'that he had waited on him at *Norwich*, and discoursed 'with him about this Matter in the presence of the Arch-'Deacon (Dr. *Jeffery*'s) And insinuated to the People, as 'if my Lord had now a more favourable Opinion of their 'Challenge than before, since he had given him a more 'Just Relation (as he said) of the Circumstances, but 'none of us could believe his Relation.

Animad. We hope 'twas no Offence to wait on the Bishop of *Norwich*, but we deny what they say was Insinuated; for we neither did, nor do Esteem our selves the *Aggressors, or first Challengers*.

And though they *could not Believe the Relation* he gave, 'was nevertheless *True*.

Rel. p. 5.

Rel. p. 8. 'We hope we have ſtopt the Gangrene that 'it ſpreads no further in our Corner, the People being 'generally ſatisfied, and do believe them now to be Blaſ-'phemers, becauſe they refuſed to come to a Trial.

Animad. If they have ſtopt the *Gangrene*, as they falſly call it, what need they then ſeek the Remedy of the *Parliament*, by *Petitioning* them? Doth not this ſhew what Spirit they are of? But our Defence againſt them, is, *The Shield of Faith*, which is able to quench all the Fiery Darts of the Devil: *By it the Elders obtained a good Report, ſubdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteouſneſs, obtained Promiſes, ſtopped the Mouths of Lions, quenched the Violence of Fire, eſcaped the Edge of the Sword, out of Weakneſs were made Strong, waxed Valiant in Fight, turned to flight the Armies of the Aliens*, Heb. 11. 2, 33, 34.

Are theſe *Miniſters* of *Chriſt*? Are theſe *Ambaſſadors* of the *Prince of Peace*, who endeavour the Subverſion of their Neighbours Peace, both Civil and Religious?

But what a weak, as well as falſe, Affirmation is it to ſay, *The People are generally ſatisfied, and do believe us now to be Blaſphemers, becauſe* (as they ſpeak) *we refuſed to come to a Trial*? For we were willing to come to a Trial, as appears by *our Letters*, and their *own Relation* of the *Conference*, upon ſuch reaſonable Terms, as the *Juſtice of England* allows by the Common Law, even to Malefactors, viz. *A Copy of their Charge*; but this they Peremptorily Denied us. Now is it probable, that the People ſhould be ſo *Generally Satisfied*, and Believe that we were *Blaſphemers*, when the Cauſe aſſigned for this Pretended Satisfaction and Belief is Evidently and Notoriouſly Falſe? This Triumphing of *theſe Prieſts*, before they have got the Victory, both loudly Proclaims their own Weakneſs, and manifeſtly Impoſeth upon the Credulity of the People.

Note, Moreover, that these *Priests*, who *first Challenged* and *Charged* Us (the former of which they now deny) did at the *Conference* use Various Ways to deter us, from Proving them what they really were and are, viz. The *first Challengers*; and did Insultingly Demand our Names, and whence we were, as if they had been the *King's Justices* of the Peace; and would Impose upon, and Question us, as if they had a Jurisdiction over us; and would, as if we were Children, have Catechised us; which gave our *Friend* Occasion to tell them, *If they would prove themselves Ministers of Christ, he would be Catechised by them*; but not one of the *Challengers* would undertake that, as before is hinted. Yet one Queried of us, *Whether we own'd the Resurrection?* to which Answer was given, *We did own it, according to the Holy Scriptures.*

And then We were ask'd, *Whether Christ was Born of a Virgin, and whether that Christ that was born of the Virgin* Mary, *was now Glorified?*

To which we Replied, *That he was, and is Glorified, according to his own Prayer*, John 17.

Then the *Priests* Accused *G. W.* and Charged him, with Preferring our own Writings to the Holy Scriptures.

But we denied that *G. W.* hath so done, or that we Prefer our Writings to the Holy Scriptures.

Then they Suggested, That our *Teachers* have Asserted some *Blasphemies* against the *Priestly Office of Christ*; which we utterly Deny, as a Gross Slander cast upon our *Teachers*.

For howsoever we may be Accused and Misrepresented by *those Men*, that seem to be in *a Confederacy* against us, and say Page 1. *We could make nothing appear under their Hands, that they were the Challengers*; we hope, we have now done that to the Satisfaction of the Impartial, beyond

only,

only urging some Stories we had heard as a Provocation, as they say, Page 1.

And as to the Liberty, Page 4. that they allow us, to Charge any of the *Church* of *England*-Writers with *Blasphemy*, and without giving them Book, Line or Page before hand, and their saying, *We will either Disown or Justifie it.*

We Reply, that when we Answer their *Proposal* therein, we shall be more *just* to them, than they have been to us; for we shall give them *Authors Names*, *Book* and *Page*.

Something Briefly, but truly laid down, by Way of Reply, to Hen. Meriton, John Meriton *and* Lau. Park, *their Charging the* Quakers *in* Norfolk, *with Challenging them, &c. Proving by* Certificates *that the* first Challenge *lay not on the* Quakers *Part, but on the Persons above-named, in Conjunction with* F. Bugg.

F*Rancis Bugg*, their Mercenary Agent, Printed a *Challenge* upon the *Quakers*, bearing Date, the 3d of *August*, 1698. in which he says, '*Friends*, you cannot but remember your Ancient Practice, in going into the Churches disturbing the Established Ministers, your Challenging them into the Field, to Dispute with you: But behold here is a Change with you. We may now Challenge you, and Charge you again and again; Fearfulness doth Surprize you, that you dare not appear; but remember it is a sign, you cannot defend your Errors, and that your Innocency is not Triumphant, as *G. Whitehead* boasts: Let this *Charge* and *Challenge* therefore be a Touch-Stone to try your Sincerity, and let it be a Monument of your Cowardise and Insincerity for ever.

Now

Now whether the Three Persons above named, who did so publickly Espouse *F. B's Charge* and *Challenge*, be not Included in the [*We*] Expres'd in the above Recited *Challenge*? Let their following Actions demonstrate.

For upon the 28th Day of the Month called *August* last, *L. Park* wrote a Letter to *S. Cater*, a Minister among the *Quakers*, with the said *Printed Challenge* inclosed; acquainting him, the said *S. Cater*, 'That he, the said *L. Park*, and 'F. *Bagg*, and Four more (Six in all) would make good 'the Charge therein contained, and that they had agreed 'upon Time and Place, *viz.* The *Third* of *October* next '(says he) if you will meet us with the same Number, 'at Ten of the Clock in the Forenoon, of that Day, in '*Dereham Church*; or if that place Offend you, at any 'other place within the said Parish of *West-Dereham*, and 'you are desired to resolve us in 14 days time, that we 'may relie upon it.

And further, to shew the Industry and Officiousness of the Three *Priests* before named, to Push on the said *Challenge*, and to Urge our Acceptance thereof, to come forth on the *Third* of *October* next after: The following *Certificates* may fully Evince.

This is to Certifie, That on or about the 28th Day of the Month called *August*, 1698. *John Meriton* and *Lau. Park* came, with *F. Bagg*, accompanied with several of the Inhabitants of *West-Dereham*, to the House of *William Phillips* (*Tho. Becket*'s Wife being there) and did leave a *Printed Challenge* (with *F. Bagg*'s Name thereto) against the People call'd *Quakers*; and soon after, upon the same day, *Samuel Chicko*, one of the Inhabitants of *West-Dereham* aforesaid, brought a Paper in Writing to the said *Thomas Becket*'s Wife, wherein was Propos'd a Meeting to be upon the *Third* of *October* next following, in *West-Dereham Church*, and that there would be Six

of

of them, and would allow us the like Number, to Debate the Matters contained in the said Printed Challenge. *Witness our Hands.*

William Phillips,
Mary Baker.

This is to Certifie, That upon or about the 20th Day of the Month called *August*, 1698. *Hen. Meriton* and *John Meriton* came, with *F. Bugg*, to the House of *John Hubbard*, in *Stoak*, in *Norfolk*, and there did urge again the said Matter, of a Publick Meeting, in the Presence of,

John Hubbard,
Daniel Phillips,
Edward Plumstid.

And the same day, the *Priests*, *Hen. Meriton* and *John Meriton*, with *F. Bugg*, went to the *Crown Inn*, in the said Town of *Stoak*; and one or more of them, would have had the *Inn-keeper* Post up the said Printed *Challenge* upon the *Sign-Post* or any other Place, which the said *Inn-keeper* refused to do: This he affirmed in our presence.

John Gurney,
Joseph Haddak,
Gilbert Lowe.

By all which it manifestly appears, that they were the *Aggressors, and first Challengers* and *not We*: For, *first*, here is a Printed *Challenge*, and altho' it has only *F. Bugg*'s name to it, yet it's in the Plural Number [*We*] and in the most daring and insulting Terms, as could well be expreſt: Now this [*We*] could not mean *F. Bugg* alone, but some *Others in Conjunction* with him; and who is it most rational to suppose those to be? But the aforesaid *Priests* that accompanied him; as the fore going *Certificates* set forth?

Secondly, *L. Park*'s Letter to *S. Cater* (afore recited) telling him; that he, and *F. Bugg*, with Four more

(Six

(Six in all), would meet a like Number of the *Quakers*; to make good the *Charge* contained in the Printed *Challenge*, acquainting him with *Time* and *Place*, and requiring a Positive Answer in Fourteen Days.

Thirdly, *F. Bugg*, *L. Park* and *J. Meriton*, urging the same at *West-Dereham*; and *F. Bugg*'s Writing a Paper to Good-Wife *Becket* (as he calls her) saying, *If the Teachers amongst the Quakers would not come forth, then they that were well-meaning amongst them, might let it and leave them*, &c.

Fourthly, *H. Meriton* and *J. Meriton*, going to *Stoak*, with *F. Bugg*; and there again Urging the aforesaid *Challenge*.

Fifthly, Their Going together to an *Inn* in *Stoak*, and pressing the *Inn-keeper*, to post the Printed *Challenge* against us. All which Passages were before, we wrote, our first Letter to them, dated the *7th* of the *7th* Month, 1698.

Wherefore let all Sober and Moderate Persons Judge, who were the first *Challengers*; and whether we could do any less, than Appear and Defend *Our selves*, from their false *Charges* (considering how they dared us to *come forth*, &c.) and Charged us with *Fearfulness* and *Surprise*; if we did not, and said, *Let it be a Monument of your Cowardise and Insincerity for ever*.

A

Copies of several *Letters* that passed between the *Priests*, and some of the People called *Quakers*.

The Priests, *with their Assistant* Francis Bugg, *having first Challenged Us, as is manifest by the foregoing* Certificates, *we could not but think our selves obliged to Appear in the* Defence *of God's most Holy and Blessed* Truth; *and thereupon sent them the following Letter,* The 7th of the 7th Month, 98. *which they falsly stile* The Quakers Challenge.

IT is Prudence in Wise Men, to Hear and Weigh a *Defence*, as well as a *Charge*. *Francis Bugg* has *Charged* the People called *Quakers* in *Print*, and has been Answered, to those several *Charges*, several Times. Some of the Answers wrote in the *Defence* of the said People, are Entituled, *A Charitable Essay*, *A Just Enquiry*, *Innocency Triumphant*, and *The Counterfeit Convert a Scandal to Christianity*: Which are those, which at present occur to our Memory. And when you have read over these *Answers*, if you will give it under your Hands, that those *Answers* are *Defective*: Or, if you think you have *Matter* to *Charge us* withal, let *us* have *your* Charge under *your* own Hands, and appoint *Time* and *Place* Convenient, and *we* or some, others of *us* (God willing) will meet *you*, as Publickly as *you* Please. But *we* reject *Francis Bugg*'s Charge, as being already Sufficiently Answered, several Times over, as also him to be one of the Persons concerned against us in *Disputation*, because of his Unreasonableness.

We cannot suppose *you* so void of Common Sense, as to look upon it suitable to a Right Management of *Controversie*, to Answer an Opposer several times over in One and the Same Thing or Things.

And be it known to you all, this is not through any *Conſciouſneſs* to our ſelves, of holding any *Errors*; but if *you* think it is, *you* may if you Pleaſe, try the utmoſt of *your Skill* and *Strength*, and ſee what *you* can Get by it. But pray leave off Boaſting, until you have obtained *Victory*.

Remember the Anſwer that was given to *Ben-hadad*, 1 *Kings* 20. 11. You may make up a *Quaker* according to your own Dreſs, to Pleaſe *your* Fancies; but Counterfeits will not paſs with *us* for True Coin.

Therefore to Conclude at Preſent, as *we* ſaid before, *we* are Free, or ſome Others of *us*, to Meet with *you*, or any of *you* all, *Francis Bugg* only Excepted, for the *Reaſons* aforeſaid, to take *your Charge*, and ſtand a Publick Tryal, deſiring only the *Common Privileges to ſuch Occaſions belonging*, Provided, as aforeſaid, *you* think Meet, in *your* own Names, or any other of *your* Cloth, to *Charge us*.

And through the Lord's Aſſiſtance *you* ſhall hear from *us*, or ſome others of *us*, whom *you*, or ſome of *you*, have endeavoured to Traduce, and we Doubt not Publickly to put aſide that Diſguiſe that by others have been put upon *us*, and to make it appear to all unbiaſſed Perſons, that *we* really are, in the *Truth*, and *Simplicity* of the *Goſpel*, of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Your Real Friends,

Richard Aſhby, *Stephen Stanton*, *Tho. Buckingham*,
John Hubbard, *Daniel Phillips*, *Richard Cale*,
Philip Teſſell, *Matth. Harriſon*, *John Brown*,
Rich. Marler, *John Hunter*,

The

The Priests *Answer to the foregoing Letter.*

Friends,

IT has not been from any Diſtruſt of the Goodneſs of our *Cauſe*, or any backwardneſs in *us* to Defend *It*, that *we* have been thus long in returning an *Anſwer* to the Challenge *you* ſent *us*, but partly from not being able to reſolve immediately, at that Diſtance *we* Live, from thoſe *we* had to Conſult, how far it was fit to Comply with ſome of *your* Terms, that appeared unreaſonable to *us*, and partly from the difficulty of getting *your Books*, which *you* might with greater Juſtice expect in this Caſe *we* ſhould Read, if they were permitted to go more freely, than yet *we* can find, into other Hands, as well as thoſe of *your Friends*. But having, with a great deal of Trouble, in ſome Meaſure got over this Stop, *we* ſhall not inſiſt upon *Francis Bugg*'s bearing any Part in the Intended *Diſpute*, nor Wave the Challenge *you* have turned upon *us*, inſtead of accepting of *It*, which yet *we* think *you* ought to have done, Notwithſtanding what *you* Precariouſly affirm in *your* own Cauſe, of *It* being Unreaſonable, and Anſwered already.

But *your* excluding *him*, ſhall not hinder *us*, or ſome of our Brethren, from giving *you* a Meeting in Anſwer to *your Challenge*.

And that *we* may prevent *Tumults* and *Confuſion*, and that *our* Meeting may obtain the Deſign *we* all Hope for, God's *Glory*, and the Hearers *Edification*, *we* think fit to acquaint *you* with theſe our following Propoſitions:

I. *That the Place to Meet in be* Weſt-Dereham *Church, being pretty Capacious and well Gallery'd.*

II. *That the time of* our *Meeting be on* Thurſday *the* 8th *of* December, *at Ten of the Clock in the Forenoon, and ſo on, as many* Thurſdays *following, as there ſhall be occaſion for.*

III. *That but Six of a ſide be permitted to Diſpute, and thoſe Six to be known Inhabitants, within the Counties of* Norfolk, *and* Suffolk, *or the City of* Norwich, *and that there be but one of thoſe Six to ſpeak at a time, and that he be not interrupted, unleſs he runs out beyond the* Term of Five Minutes at a time.

IV. *That no Perſonal Reflections ſhall be made one againſt another, that are Forreign to the Cauſe.*

V. *That a Notary of each ſide be appointed, to write down the* Objections *and* Anſwers *that are made by either Party, and that they be compared at the end of every Meeting, if there ſhall happen to be more than one.*

The Matters *we* Charge *you* with are as follow.

I. We *Charge* you *with* Blaſphemy *againſt* God.

II. *With* Blaſphemy *againſt* Jeſus Chriſt.

III. *With* Blaſphemy *againſt the* Holy Scriptures.

IV. We *Charge* you *with great Contempt of* Civil Magigracy, *and the* Ordinances *which* Jeſus Chriſt *Inſtituted, viz.* Baptiſm *by* Water, *and the* Lord's Supper, *with* Bread *and* Wine.

V. We *Charge* you, *that the* Light within *as taught by* you, *leaves* you *without any certain Rule, and Expoſes* you *to the forementioned, and many other* Blaſphemies.

Hen. Meriton, John Meriton, Lau. Parker.

The

A Reply to the Prieſts *Letter.* The 31ſt. of the 8th Month, 1698.

Friends,

YOUR Paper, with the Charge upon the People call'd *Quakers*, without a Date, came to the Hands of our Friend *John Hubbard* on the 27th Inſtant. *You* were pleaſed to call the Offer *we* made to *you* in Writing a *Challenge*, which Term *we* think is no ways Applicable to it. For taking Notice of *your* readineſs to Eſpouſe *Francis Bugg*'s Charge and Challenge, *we* look'd upon it very Reaſonable, and Prudence in *you*, as Wiſe Men, to hear *our Defence*; therefore referr'd *you* to ſeveral of *our* Printed Anſwers, which if *you* had deſired of *us* to have ſeen them, *we* would have procured them for *you*; but not one word of that from *you*, in ſo many Weeks time. And for *our* excluding *F. B.* from any part of the intended Diſpute, *we* have ſo much Cauſe and Reaſon for it (*as* believe) as will ſufficiently Juſtifie *us*, in the Opinion of all Judicious Perſons. And whereas *you* render it difficult, to procure *our* Friends Books, *we* are willing to Expoſe them to any that deſires them, as is well known, and as *you* might have prov'd, if *you* had made Trial.

And now, before *we* take Notice of *your* Propoſitions, *we* judge it neceſſary to enquire into the Extent of *your* Charge, whether it be upon the whole Body of the People called *Quakers*, or upon particular Perſons, or upon the Writings of particular Perſons, Eſpecially *your* Three firſt Charges. If *you* Charge a whole Body of People, *you* are not Juſt in *your* Limitation, that the Perſons that have a ſhare in the Diſpute, be only known Inhabitants in *Norfolk*, *Suffolk*, and City of *Norwich*, and at the ſame time Charge all the ſaid People Generally. If it be againſt particular Perſons,

we

we judge *you* ought to name Them in *your* Charge; if it be againſt the Writings of particular Perſons, it is neceſſary for *you* to name the *Authors*, and the *Titles of the Books*, and the *Pages*; this *we* Inſiſt upon. Theſe things Premiſed, *we* take Notice of *your* Propoſitions.

I. As to the place in *Weſt-Derham*, *we* do not object againſt it, but are Indifferent as to that.

II. The Day perfixt being the Eighth of *December* next, will not be Convenient for ſome of *us*, being in *Stourbridge-fair* Week.

III. That Six Perſons only of a ſide be Permitted to Manage the Diſpute, and thoſe Six to be known Inhabitants in *Norfolk*, *Suffolk*, and *Norwich*, *we* agree to, provided *your* Charge reaches not to any *Perſon*, or the *Writings* of any *Perſon*, that lives not in either of the ſaid Counties, or ſaid City; but if it doth, *we* expect (and account it very Reaſonable) to be left to *our* free Liberty in the Choice of *our* Six, and allow the ſame Liberty to *you*. And that but One be allowed to ſpeak at a time, is very neceſſary, and we like it well; but not to be Limitted Preciſely to the ſpace of Five Minutes; yet to endeavour Brevity, and before Anſwer be made, that there be a little Pauſe.

IV. V. Your Fourth and Fifth Propoſitions *we* like, as ſtated by *you*; and do expect an Explanation of the Extent of *your* Charge, as is aboveſaid, to be ſent *us* without delay; waving to Repeat or Object againſt it, or any Article thereof, but refer that until *we* hear further from *you*. *We* are your Friends,

Richard Aſhby. *John Hubbard.* *Dan. Phillips.*
Richard Caſe. *John Brown.* *Philip Taſſell.*

The

The Priests *Answer to the Foregoing Letter, Dated* November *the* 3*d.* 1698.

Friends,

WE Observe in *your* last, Dated *October* the 31st 1698. how apt you are to Catch at every little Escape, tho" nothing relating to the Cause, the omission of a Date. *We* hope, tho' *we* forgot the 29th of *October*, *we* shall not forget the 8th of *December*. *You* are offended *we* call *your* first Letter a *Challenge* to *us*, tho' *your* betters have thought it the Boldest and Perfect that ever was sent to the whole *Host of Israel*, viz. as *you* more than once in *your* Letter term it to *us*, or any of *us* all, and to any of *our* Cloth, and that from the Hands of such whom *we* never took to be any great *Goliahs*. But all this Anger it seems is, because *we* so Zealously (as you think) Espouse *Francis Bugg's* Charge. One may see how ready *you* are to take Fire, when so small a Spark will kindle *you*; For one of *us* was not there when he delivered his Charge; Another of *us* came by meer accident; and None of *us* were any other than as Witnesses to the Delivery of it; which any Three of *your* honest Neighbours, *we* suppose, might have been, without Offence. As to the Books *you* mention'd to *us* to be Read, which *you* conceive would have cooled *our* Zeal for *Bugg*, and his so often (as *you* say) baffl'd Charge. *You* may please to know, that *we* have Read them, and that *Bugg* is not Answer'd, nor can be Answer'd any other way (seeing the Charge is drawn from Quotations out of *your own Books*,) but by denying the Truth of Them, which *your* pretended Answerers do not do; but betake themselves to their usual Palliating and Painting Tricks, to cover over and hide their Deformities.

We

We confess, *we* had a better Opinion of *your* Principles before *we* saw *your Books*, than now *we* have; for indeed *we* have received more Satisfaction from *your* Answers, than from the Books they pretend to Answer; being confirm'd more in *our* Belief, that they are Unanswerable. And if *you* write in this manner, *we* shall never desire to take the Pen out of *your* Hands, for it will do *us* no Hurt, but for your Gall that is in the Ink. Yet because *you* say, he must be Rejected, and *you* will have it so; *we* have given *you your* Humour, and have accepted of *your* Challenge without [illegible].

Friends, *Your* People have been ever ready to say, *Our* Charges have been Lies & Forgeries, and every where have run with this Cry in their Mouths; Lies, all Lies, because alas! they never Read *our Books*, or at least never Compar'd them with *your* Authors: Therefore *we* perceive that Writing Books will not do; but *we* must bring forth those that *you* have Written, at a Publick Meeting, and lay them open before *your* Deluded Followers, and desire them to see with their own Eyes, and perhaps they may see such a Frightful Sight, as they little expected there.

You might easily have discerned, that *our* Charge affects the whole Body of *your* People; it relating to Blasphemies so long and so often Printed, and yet never Contradicted or Censured, but Asserted to be from Persons Infallible. *Blasphemies* so often approved of by *your* Second Days Meetings, where all *your Books* are Examined, and by an *Index Expurgatorius* Corrected, tho' written from the Mouth of the Lord. So that *your Church* hath owned them, and *we* may justly Charge the *Blasphemy* of those Books upon *it*, till they Disown them.

But *you* seem to be much Concerned for the Restraint *we* lay upon *you*, so that *you* may not go out of this Diocess for *your* assistance. But truly Sirs, *you* see, *we* have put the same

same Restraint upon *our* selves, *we* will not go out of the Diocess, perhaps, but a little way from Home for *ours*; *we* cannot think *you* can be at a want for help in such a Diocess, where there are several Thousands of *you*.

Besides, if *you* will have a little Patience, the Persons *you* had probably designed for this Service may have work enough at Home ere long: For *we* are Inclinable to believe, that the like Charge to this will go through many Dioceses in this Kingdom: So that they may save *their* Powder and Shot till the Charge comes to *their* Door.

Friends, tho' *we* intend to Charge *you* with Blasphemy out of *your own Books*; yet *we* cannot think it fit to give *you* the Authors Names, Line, and Page; for that were to send *you our* Arguments before the Day we shall use them, that *you* may have time the more cunningly to Elude the Force of them. It is enough to let you see, we intend to Charge you with Blasphemy, as expressed in our last; tho' we should not be so Foolishly Generous, as to tell you the very Place where we intend to Assault you. Besides we our selves have not yet read over some of your Books, out of which, as we are Reading them, there arises every Day new Matter for a Charge; and so perhaps there may to the time of our Meeting: For we can scarce open a Book of yours, but presently we are even Frighted with such Apparition, that sends us to our Prayers, for a Poor Deluded People, that are daily Haunted with them: And further we may add, that you have their Books as well as we, and would you read them over as we do, ye your selves could not but see those *Blasphemies* we Charge you with, being too big to escape your sight.

But you think it is fit, the Authors of those Books out of which we extract *your Charge*, should be permitted to speak for themselves. You cannot but know, that most of those Authors are Dead; and as for them that are Alive, we

have already heard them in your *Priests* to little purpose! However, they have no Reason to Challenge it as a peculiar Due to them, to be the only Vindicators of their Cause, seeing every particular Member of your Church is concern'd in it, as well as they: So that it is a Charge upon every one of you all, as well as upon the Authors of these Books, you having Espoused them, till they be Disown'd, and Condemn'd by you.

To conclude, We cannot see how it can consist with either Justice or Prudence to alter our Method, for the Reasons given: We therefore think it but a vain thing for you to trouble your selves or us, with any more such Letters. Poor People! that are going Blindfold to *Samaria* instead of *Dothan*. The Lord open your Eyes, to see where you are, and whither you are a going, is the Prayer of your best of Friends, tho' you may possibly think us your greatest Enemies.

Hen. Meriton, John Meriton, Laur. Parke.

To *Henry Meriton*, *John Meriton*, and *Laurence Parke*, a Reply to the foregoing Letter, dated *November* 3. 1698.

Friends,

YOURS of the third Instant *we* received, wherein is the date of *your* former; in Answer to which, when, *we* in Friendly Sort told *you* of that Omission, it was not that *we* did Catch at any little escape of *yours*, which did at least relate to the *Letter*, if not the *Cause*. But to proceed;

proceed; As in *our* laſt *we* Judge the Term *Challenge* not proper to the Offer *we* made, whatever the Judgment of *your* Selves, or Others, may be concerning it; As for its Boldneſs and Perverſe (as *you* are pleaſed to Term it) *we* take it to be another Eſcape of *your* Memories, to ſuppoſe it herein to exceed any of thoſe (as *you* ſay) which were ſent to the whole *Body of Iſrael*. But ſuch as it is *we* doubt not to make Good, and that in Truth void of Wrath. As to *Francis Bugg*, *you* did Eſpouſe his *Charge* Blindfold, as appears by *your* after Inquiry, and Reading of *our Books*, and did Eſpouſe it by more Ways than that of Witneſſing to the Delivery of *the Charge*, which none of *our* Honeſt unprejudicate Neighbours would.

As for *Quotations* made by *Bugg* from *our Books*, *you* ſay the pretended Anſwerers deny the Truth of them, but betake themſelves to their Uſual *Palliating* and *Painting Trials*. This Aſſertion *we* have no Cauſe to Credit, but for the preſent will ſay, that *we* know that in ſeveral Anſwers of *ours* to Books of this ſort, there is frequently Detected falſe Quotations, and his Apparent Forgeries, which if either *you* have not Read, or not Obſerved, it might have been well enough to forbear that Scurrility of *Painting*, and *Trials*.

Now for *your Charge*, *you* Acknowledge it to be upon the whole Body of *us*, and therefore (as in *our* former) *we* think *you* are not juſt in *your* Limitation, nor does *your* Threat (if you will have a little Patience, *&c.*) fright us from ſtill Inſiſting on our Exceptions: For, as our laſt did declare our Acceptance of ſuch of your Propoſitions, as were Equal and Fair, and deſired the reſt might be agreeable, and ſuch as we are Perſwaded no Ingenuous or Juſt Perſons would Evade or Deny us: So we ſtill inſiſt on them, not knowing any Power or Dominion you have over us, to over rule what we have ſo fairly offered to qua-

lifie your *Limitations*. For if you intend to confine us as Respondents, only who are within this *Diocess*, it is Reasonable to confine you not to *Charge* Persons or their Books more Remote or Absent: For why should a Man whom you may *Charge*, be obliged to Answer by *Proxy*, when perhaps he can better Defend himself; the Justice of the Common Law in this Case much exceeds your pretence of *Edification*; and this being denied by you, we take it for granted, your Design is to Censure and pass Judgment on Persons Unheard. And if *your Charge* be to be drawn from *Books*, it is as reasonable by the Common Voice of Mankind, that their *Titles* and *Pages* be given, the *Authors* of which if Living, have an undoubted Right to Explain for Themselves; or if Dead, such Notice is reasonable for our due Preparation to Answer: Till which we shall only say, that the Living Labours of the Dead, have this Justice due to Them, *viz.* that the whole be considered, and the Scope and Intent of the Writer be taken, and not Rigidly, much less Falsly to pervert his Words, to a Sense Contrary and Repugnant to the Scope of the whole: The refusal hereof will speak a Design Partial, Injurious and Precipitant; but we hoping (on better Consideration) you'l do otherwise, do expect as above to be sent us, in such convenient Time, as we may Examine them, which cannot be in less time then Three Weeks at least. This Demand, it's true you Laugh at, and call it a Foolish Generosity; yet, it being Reasonable, we insist on it: For the Frightful Apparitions which by opening our *Books*, you say, sent you to your Prayers, we doubt your *Frights* or *Feavers* have been so great, as to prevent your having any true Idea of *Them*, or any loving Concern for *Us* therein: And not finding our Selves Haunted, as you Suggest, we rather desire you to speak Truth, than offer false Sacrifice. For Conclusion

to

to this, and to Try your Ingenuity, whether your Method be to do as you would be done unto, we put these following Questions.

I. *Whether* you *are willing to be Charged out of all the Old and New Books, Pamphlets and Sermons that* your *Brethren the* Clergy *have Wrote and Printed, to stand and fall by them?*

II. *Are* you *willing* we *should Publickly Charge* you *with* Errors, *or* Mistakes *out of any of the abovementioned, and not beforehand give the Particular Instances to you? For know ye, that we expect Equal Liberty with you, to Charge as well as to be Charged.*

III. *Will* you *Personate all* your *Brethren, as above, both Dead and Living, so as to be Charged out of their Books in their stead?*

Your *direct Answer* we *expect without further Evasion, Boast or Menace, in the interim, conclude,*

Your abused (because not sufficiently known) Friends.

Richard Ashby, Daniel Phillips,
John Hubbard, Richard Case.

The Reply, dated *November* the 16*th* 1698.

Friends,

YOUR last does not a little astonish Us. *1st.* That you should deny your *Challenge*, which is as plain an one, as Words in English can make it, and truly very brave, *to all our Cloth*, that is, to Nine or Ten Thousand of Us. *2ly.* That you affirm, that we espoused *Bugg's* Cause, which you, or some of you cannot but know the contrary

contrary by one of us: For, when the laſt Summer you demanded of *Hen. Meriton*, whether he would Juſtifie *Bugg*'s Books Written againſt you, he Anſwer'd, They contained Matter of Fact, which he was not capable of judging of, having not the Books to compare them with *Francis Bugg*'s Writings; yet told you, that if his Citations were true (you ſee then he made an If of it, and therefore did not juſtifie them) he would juſtifie ſuch Expreſſions were Blaſphemy.

But you are ſtill offended at our Unreaſonable Limitation of you, as to the Place whence you are to fetch your Diſputants. But *Friends*, did not you begin with us? Did not you limit us, when you rejected *Francis Bugg*? And all others too, that were not of our Cloth, ſome of whom you know too well might have been very uſeful to us in this Service. Nay, did not you reject *Francis Bugg* for this Reaſon, becauſe he had been Anſwered, as you pretend, over and over again, and was unreaſonable, as if we had nothing to do but *Aſinum agere*: And may not we ſay the ſame of your *Hackney Diſputants*, they have trudged ſo long in that Road, and have been Spur'd and Gall'd by us enough already, and therefore in reaſon we ought to turn them off a-while, and give them reſt till another occaſion; more plainly, they have been Anſwered over and over already, and are unreaſonable.

Beſides, *Your Church*, which you profeſs your ſelves to be ſo Zealous Members of, have owned, and approved of thoſe Books we intend to quote, and your ſelves have been known to admire, and almoſt adore them and their Authors: And therefore till you diſclaim them, you are as much concern'd to Vindicate them as the Authors themſelves; for by owning them you become joynt Authors, and your Plea for them will be the Plea of Parties, and not of Proxies.

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But now, When your Court of Equity will not Relieve you, you Fly to Common Law; but if you give us no better Proof of your Skill in it, than in this Instance, we shall have little Reason to take your Counsel in Law Business.

Friends, 'Tis Matter of Fact we Charge you with, that we find such and such Blasphemous Expressions in your Books: For Matter of Right, whether such Expressions are to be esteemed Blasphemy, we shall leave it to the Judgment of the Auditors. The Matters of Fact your Authors have already owned them, at least so much as will make good our Charge: And for Matter of Right, whether such Expressions be Blasphemous or no, we think the Common Law will not allow the Accused Malefactor, when he's accused of this Fact arraign'd to Judge of the Law, or whether his Fact hath been a Breach of it. Suppose we had Charged some of your *Friends* with Common Swearing by their Maker, and they should not deny Matter of Fact, that they have said such words; only they excuse them with a great deal of Archness, that they were spoke in Passion, that they drop'd from them rashly, or their Minds did a little run out, or truly they do not affect such Speeches, or they may see Cause otherwise to word them: is there any Law or Equity, such Men should be admitted in any Court in the World to plead and Apologize for Common Swearing? If Matter of Fact be prov'd or own'd, may not the Judge turn such Men out of the Court, and pass the Definitive upon them. The Fact is own'd by the Men themselves, that such Expressions are in their Books, so much at least wise as will prove the Charge, and let the Auditory (whom we Appeal to as Judges in this Case) Determine, whether Blasphemy or no. We dare Affirm, it will be easier for the People to Judge, that such and such Words are *Blasphemy*, then that

Law

such

ſuch words are *Swearing*. And we are Sorry to ſee you are ſo Zealous for ſuch *Authors*, only to give them an an opportunity to excuſe *Blaſphemy*. At laſt, you direct us to the *Golden* Rule in Divinity, *to do as we would be done by*; and think you have Gravell'd us with Three Queſtions, which you ſuppoſe we cannot Anſwer; if we ſtick to our former Meaſure, without apparent Violation of it.

Now Sirs, what are thoſe hard Meaſures, I pray? Why truly, after we have Charged ſome of yours with *Blaſphemy*, in ſome *Books*, Printed *Ten*, *Twenty*, *Thirty*, ſome *Forty* Years ago, that were never Corrected, nor Cenſured by your *Church*, in your Second Days Meeting, Erected on purpoſe to Examine *Books*, and Licence them; but have been Approved and Commended to us, and Admired by almoſt all of you; we Demand, that you would either Juſtifie, or Diſown them Publickly under your Hands. And now you ask us very Pertinently, Whether we are willing to be Charged with all the Old and New Books and Pamphlets that our Brethren of the *Clergy* have Written or Printed, to ſtand or fall by them.

Such an Impertinency as this is, would be almoſt Intolerable, but that we are ſo commonly uſed to them by your Party: Do but Scratch your Heads a little, and conſider ſeriouſly the Force of ſuch a Conſequence. We are bound to Juſtifie or Diſown all the Books of our Brethren, as to every little Error or Miſtake, becauſe we call upon you only to Juſtifie or Doſown the *Blaſphemies* of yours: We doubt not but there have been *ſome tolerable Errors* in ours, which are no great Blot to an Author that acknowledges himſelf to be a Man, *viz.* Fallible; but a Mighty Prejudice againſt the Infallible Club, whether at *Rome* or *Grace-Church-ſtreet*, that pretend they cannot Err: And we are only obliged to a Charitable Forbearance in ſuch Caſes, when you will be obliged for every Error you find

find in yours, by reason of such a Pretence, to disown them as Cheats.

But if any of our Authors have Wrote or Printed *Blasphemy*, we are sure such have not been approved or allowed of by our General Meeting, our Convocation, who have made bold to Censure them without asking the Authors leave; or if there be any such that have escaped the Knowledge of the Convocation, and therefore not Censured by them, perhaps they have been Condemned, if not Burnt by *Parliaments* and *Universities*; or if they have escaped such a Censure, bring out such *Books of Ours* when you will, and you shall see, we will either Justifie or Disown them, without calling for the Authors to come and plead their Cause.

To the Second Question we Answer, You shall have equal Liberty with us, Produce our Books, and your Charge against them (Supposing it to be of *Blasphemy*) when you will, after you have first Answered ours, and we will give you leave to reserve your particular Instances to the very Time and Place of Meeting, if you please: For we are assured, that *Blasphemy* is of so strong and rank a Scent, that every *Christian* that hath not his Nose quite stop'd, that as St. *Paul* says, can but exercise his Senses never so little about Good or Evil, as soon as ever it's open'd or discover'd, will presently nauseate and turn away from it. And we are sorry that so many of you have got such a Stuffing in your Heads, as not to perceive it; nay, you think them sweet Odours sure, that you will not be satisfied till you be allowed Advocates to Plead for them, as sound and wholsome, and therefore to be continued in the best Room of the House, the *Church*.

The Third Question is Co-incident with the First, but we must answer it, or you'll say we dropt it for its Weight; for there is no reason we should appear in the Person of

all those our Brethren, so as to be Charged with every little Error out of their Books, in their stead; but this we will do, bring forth their *Books* and *Blasphemies*, as we have said before, and we will either Justifie them or Disown them, without consulting the Authors of them. And this is all that we desire of you, either to Justifie or Disown *Yours*, and *Their Blasphemies*, under your Hands, which we may expect from you, by the same Rule you lay before us, *Do as you would be done by.*

And why may we not expect this of you, seeing you have Abandoned your Authors in lesser matters, as in their Orders about *Ribbonds, Lace, Slit-wast-Coats, Prancing Steeds, Costly Habits, Fine Clothes, Stately Buildings, in forbearing to Thee and Thou, and Sir your Betters?* Seeing many of you have opposed their Orders in *Paying Tithes, Womens Meetings, Swearing in Courts of Judicature, of carrying no Guns in their Ships, or using the Carnal Weapon.*

Last of all, We take notice, with much joy, to see you so much fall off from the former Rude and Rugged Behaviour of those Men, whose Cause you Espouse, towards the *Clergy:* It is not long since your Address to them was in that Tinkerly Language, *Greedy Dogs, Babylon's Merchants, Devil-driven dungy Gods, Witches, Bloodhounds, Sodomites, Gimcracks, Wheelbarrows, Tatterdemallions*, which you have now Exchanged for more familiar and kind Expressions, to call us *Friends*; tho' your former Carriage hath been as Divinely Authorized as your present *Blasphemies:* Your very Railings have been, as you have pretended, by *Inspiration.* We hope, since you have begun to draw from that Old Filthy Spirit that dwelt in your Ancestors, you will at last totally Abandon them, seeing you have Abandoned them in lesser Matters, and why not in their *Blasphemies? Friends*, pray trouble us no more with your Letters, for our *Measures* are fix'd, and you may Chuse whether you will

will meet us upon the Terms resolved upon or no. No more from those who are resolved to continue your real Friends, whether you will or no.

Hen. Marlton, John Marlton, Law. Parl.

The last Letter to the Priests, *dated the 23d of the 9th Month*, 1698. *To which they returned no Answer.*

Friends,

YOURS of the 16th Instant We have received; the Tenor of it declares Your purpose still to Evade our Just Demand, as is set forth in our *Second* and *Third* Letters to you; we shall now give you a brief Reply, because we perceive our Letters are troublesome to you. *First*, if you were as Real as you pretend Friendship towards us, the Moderation of Friendship, questionless, would prevent your being Astonished at our denial of the Term *Challenge* in our first Letter to you: For then it had been our place to have Charged you; so we should have made our selves *Plaintiffs*, and you had been *Defendants*. We doubt not but upon more mature Thoughts, your Astonishment will vanish away. *2dly*. We still Insist upon our former Demands, as just and reasonable; for how can you (or any Man whatsoever) think that we, or any others for us, can make Answers to Matters thus hiddenly Charged upon us, whilst you refuse us the Knowledge of them, as (you say) they stand in our Books? Pray be plain with us, and if there be such *Real Blasphemy* (as you say) bring it forth, do not be shy, *Give us Author, Title, Book, and Page*; and if you please, tell us in the first place, what is

Blaſphemy? 2*dly.* Wherein do you Charge us with *Blaſphemy* againſt *God*, and againſt *Jeſus Chriſt*, and againſt the *Holy Scriptures?* What are the Words of thoſe ſeveral *Blaſphemies?* Your direct anſwer to thoſe Particulars. 3*dly.* We think it not worth while to follow you through all the Parts of your Letter, it being a great part of it *Rattle* and *Noiſe*, beſides our preſent buſineſs. 4*thly.* You Evade our Inſtance of the *Common Law*. We diſtinguiſh between Matter of Fact, and a Right to Judge. You have Charged us with Matter of Fact: We Demand a Copy of your Charge, that we may prepare true Anſwer to make. (As a Point of Juſtice allowed by the Common Law to *Malefactors*) We deny your having any Juriſdiction over us, as Judges; and before we Submit, we will have full Proof of your Commiſſion. Temporal Judges you are not, and to be Spiritually Qualified, you muſt prove, before we acknowledge you as ſuch. 5*thly.* Seeing you reſolutely Refuſe our Juſt Demand, we do not look upon our ſelves obliged to Meet you under the Limitation of your Terms.

We ſtand to our former Offer, and by the Terms we have offered to Qualifie yours; and if you refuſe, it ſhews (for all your Pretence of Friendſhip) a contrary Deſign upon us; we cannot look upon your Reſolution to Friendſhip any thing elſe, but an empty Pretence, until (as a Proof that it is otherwiſe) you give us the Inſtances of your Charge in Form and Manner aforelaid; which is not (as you ſay) to ſend us your Arguments before hand, but the Matter of Fact you Charge us with. This, as a Point of Juſtice from you, we ſeek; not your Mercy, make your Arguments as ſtrong as you will. But while you thus put us off, we look upon it no other than a Shift, and Evaſion on your Parts, and a Deſign to Over-rule us. We leave it with you as a Teſt upon your Reſolute

Friend-

Friendſhip. Give us our Juſt Demand of Author, Title, Book, and Page, with convenient time (as ſet forth in our laſt to you) to prepare to make Anſwer; which, if you ſtill deny, we look upon your Pretence of Friendſhip to be a meer Complement and Decoy, and [illegible] Deſign of much Evil to us Couch'd under't. Notwithſtanding we are your Friends, and deſire you would mind the *Witneſs of God in your Conſciences*, that admits of *no Deceit*; and will, if minded, lead you to *deal Plainly*: To which you muſt Stand or Fall one Day.

Richard Aſhby, Dan. Phillips,
John Hubbard, Richard Caſe, &c.

P. S.

SEeing you have rejected our Terms, as aforeſaid, and we have refuſed to be Impoſed upon by ſome of your Limitations, we therefore ſhall take our Liberty, either to Meet or not Meet you: And if we Meet you, to have others of our Friends preſent with us, who are not Inhabitants within this *Dioceſs*, if we ſee Cauſe, and if they have Freedom thereto.

An

An Answer to the Certificate *of the* Inhabitants *of* West-Dereham, *and other* Parishes *Adjacent*, &c.

WHereas, they say, That *West-Dereham* is an exceeding *Small Salary, for a Minister, which discouraged most Men from supplying the Cure*, &c.

Let it be Observ'd, that had the *Salary* been Greater, it is likely it had not wanted a supply to the Cure. So that a greater *Salary*, a greater *Inducement*; a little *Salary*, a little *Inducement*; and no *Salary*, no *Inducement* at all: According to the Old *Proverb*, *No Mony, no Cure*: Or, *No Penny, no Pater Noster*. But is this a Mark of a True *Minister*? Or is it not directly contrary to *Christ*'s *Words* and *Commands*? Matth. 10. 7, 8.

And that Whereas *Laurence Parke* came not to the Cure until *June*, 1691. as they say; 'tis Observable, there was but one Person and his Wife in that Town, that did go then to the Meetings of the People call'd *Quakers*.

But after the said *Laurence Parke* came to Preach there, he made it much of his Business, at several times, to Preach against the said *People*, and that in very *Harsh* Terms and Expressions; which caus'd a Dissatisfaction in several of his *Hearers*, who thought the said *People* deserved not to be so much preached against; and those his *Sermons* caused some of them, to desire to be fully satisfied concerning the said *People*, and those things which the said *Laurence Parke* so frequently did Preach against to his Auditory, in the said Parish of *West-Dereham*; and this caused them to go to some of their *Meetings*, where they were satisfied that the said *Laurence Parke* had given a false Report concerning them and their Principles; and had much mis-

miſ-repreſented them to the People; and ſome of them have ſince left going to hear him, being fully ſatisfied in themſelves for ſo doing: So that inſtead of keeping his Hearers from the *Quakers* (ſo call'd) his miſ-repreſenting and abuſing them in his *Sermons*, was one great cauſe why ſome left him.

And whereas they ſay, 'The Wife of one *Becket* a 'Quaker, gave her ſelf the trouble of going three Miles 'to the Miniſters Houſe, on purpoſe to vex him with 'Quakerly Queſtions in a Quibling Way, on *Aſcention* day 'Morning, 1695. To which take her Certificate.

This is to Certifie, that I *Mary Becket*, the Wife of *Thomas Becket*, was much diſſatisfied in my Mind concerning ſome Religious Matters, which I heard *Laurence Parke* the *Prieſt* of *Weſt-Dereham* (where I dwell) preach in his *Sermons*, where he uſe to preach frequently, not only againſt the *Quakers*, but other *Diſſenters*, at ſeveral times, before I went among the ſaid People called *Quakers*; and for that reaſon I went to his Houſe in *Barton*, deſiring to be ſatisfied by him, touching thoſe Matters they now call *Quakerly Queſtions*, not deſigning to diſturb him, but to be inſtructed by him; he told me he could not then reſolve me, but would endeavour to ſatisfie me in ſome of his *Sermons* if I would come to *Church*, which I did; but inſtead of being ſatisfied, touching thoſe Matters, I grew more diſſatisfied in my Mind, until I heard ſome of the People called *Quakers*, and then it pleaſed the Lord, I came to be ſatisfied concerning thoſe Matters: And this was the true reaſon of my going to his Houſe, and not in the leaſt to Vex or Diſturb him. Witneſs my hand,

Mary Becket.

And

And whereas they further ſay, ‘ They remember the ‘ time, that *Becket*, the Husband himſelf, watched their ‘ Miniſter in a Lane, not far from the Church, lined on ‘ both ſides with People, to Diſpute him; when his Spi- ‘ rits were exhauſted with Preaching, and his Strength ‘ weakened, by performing the Duty of the Day. Here follows *Thomas Becket*'s Certificate.

This is to Certifie, that I *Thomas Becket* was accidentally alone in my own Hired Ground, which lies next the *Steeple-Houſe-Yard*, in *Weſt-Dereham*, when the Preiſt and the People were coming from their Worſhip; and I had no intent to ſpeak a Word to *Laurence Parke*, the Prieſt, but before he came near me (I being by the Gate next the Road, where he came) he held up his Hand, and ſaid to his Hearers, *Look yonder ſtands a Man, do not you think he looks as if he had ſeen God?* (or to that purpoſe) adding, *The Light is in him*; and then I replied, *If the Light be not within thee, thou art in a Miſerable Condition*, or Words to that effect: When he came nearer, he asked me how I did; I asked him how he did, and wiſhed him to leave *telling ſo many Lyes* of the People called *Quakers*, till he had heard the Truth of thoſe Matters, he reply'd, *When there was a Meeting at my Houſe he would come to it*, and gave me his Hand to it; but he never came, (although he had notice.) To the Truth hereof I Subſcribe my Name,

Thomas Becket.

And whereas they further ſay, that ‘ One *Phillips* a *Qua-* ‘ *ker* went to diſturb their Miniſter at his own Houſe, one ‘ *Munday* in *May* laſt, to Challenge, and Provoke him to Di- ‘ ſpute with the *Quakers*, at a Meeting at *Stoak*, that ‘ was to be held on the Morrow, as himſelf confeſſed af- ‘ ter he came Home: And he and his Friends ſet abroad

‘ the

'the Report some days before, to call the Country toge-
'ther, and then gave it out, the Priest promised, but durst
'not come. Now here follows a Certificate of the said *Phillips*.

This is to Certifie, that I *William Phillips* of *West-Dereham*, being informed that *Laurence Parke* was much disturbed at a Meeting that was at our Town the beginning of the Month call'd *May* last, and that he said, *If he knew where there was another Meeting, he would come to it*; I thought fit to go to his House, and let him know there was to be a Meeting the next day at *Stouk*, he answered, *He could not, or should not come, for that he was not then provided*; but said, that *in a short time there would be Meetings enough, when they had got the Books* (meaning our Friends Books) and more Discourse we had together, and he would have me sit down in his House and Drink, and I did not think he was offended with me, for my friendly going to his House, for *We* parted as good Neighbours, and I thought then in good Will to each other. Witness my Hand,

William Phillips.

And whereas they further say, 'This *Phillips*, together 'with one *Mason* and *Becket*, by speaking Profanely of the 'Ordinances of Christ, and setting up a Conventicle con-'trary to Law, &c.

This is a General and Proofless Charge, and deny'd by them, and till Prov'd, needs no further Reply.

And whereas they further Certifie, that their Minister, '*Laurence Parke*, had many Provocations and Challenges: 'One above all the rest, *say they*, we cannot forget, which 'was given him in Writing, when he was in the Pulpit, 'by one *Lilly*, in sight of the whole Congregation. In Answer to which, take the following Certificates.

This is to Certifie, That about Five or Six Years ago, I *Phillip Taſſell*, together with *John Brown*, being at the Burial of a Relation, at *Weſt-Dereham*; at which time, ſome of the Pariſhioners being the hearers of *Laurence Park*, told us, that their Miniſter had Preached, That the *Quakers* had not Read in a *Bible* theſe Forty Years; and that they did not care if all the *Bibles* were Burn'd.

Now we hearing the Report of ſuch a very Sad, Wicked and moſt Uncharitable Abuſe, were concerned; knowing our Innocency, did therefore write a few Lines to him, that he would admit us to a *Friendly Conference*, that he might either Prove his *Charge*, or Clear *Us* before the People; or to that Effect, without Adviſing with any of our Friends. *Witneſs our Hands*

Phillip Taſſell, *John Brown*.

This is to Certifie, That Mr. *Park* having Preached much againſt the *Quakers*, and Diſcourſed, that he would Prove them to be *No Chriſtians*; the Report thereof came to ſome of the ſaid People, and one of them gave me a few Lines to give him, to deſire a *Friendly Conference* with him about thoſe Matters, which I accordingly gave to the ſaid Mr. *Park*; and though I gave him them in the *Church*, it was my own Doing, and not by Direction of any one to give him them in that Place: And I did not underſtand that more than One or Two of the ſaid People wrote thoſe Lines; or that I might not give him them as Inoffenſively in that Place, as in any other, being one of his Hearers. This is about Five or Six Years ago, as I remember. *Witneſs my Hand*,

John Lilly.

And

And whereas they further Certifie, 'That this, and nothing but this, made them and their Ministers willing 'to Permit Mr. Bugg to come amongst them, to try if he 'could *Conjure down* that busie Spirit which possesses 'the *Quakers*, and is so troublesome to us.

Reply, First, We may conclude, by the Nature and Grossness of these words, that you, poor People, know not what you have sign'd: For you have given a Notable Reflection upon *Fra. Bugg*; Is he indeed turn'd *Conjurer*? But if it be so, we know that Spirit the Sincere *Quakers* are led by, has always been too hard for such *Conjurers*. But pray, wherefore are you so harsh in Reflections on your *Neighbours*, as though they were led by a *Diabolical Spirit*? This touches not them only, but Christ also, in whom they have Believed; and that *Spirit* that dwelt in those that Persecuted our Lord, dwells too much in you; they call'd the Master of the House *Beelzebub*, and also a *Blasphemer*; no Marvel then if his Followers be called so: We remember this Caution, *The Servant is not greater than his Lord*; we are sorry for your sakes, that you should Offer that Injury to your own Souls, but do desire you to Repent, *that God may shew you Mercy*; for you, together with your Minister, lie under that *Wo*, spoken of in *Isaiah* 5. in calling *Good* Evil, and *Light* Darkness.

Further, where as you confess, 'That you and your Minister accompanied *F. Bugg* to one *Quakers* House, and sent 'one of his Printed Charges in a Letter to *Samuel Cater*.

Answ. This is a clear Confession; here are Eighteen of you, and your Minister, have Espoused *F. Bugg*'s Challenge, and sent it not only to a *Quaker*'s House, but to *S. Cater* of *Little Port*, in the *Isle of Ely*, for him, and Five more of his Brethren, to come forth, and joyn with your *Minister* and *F. Bugg*, and *Four* more. So now you have done well

[illegible] Ingenuous, and [illegible] AS; for now the [illegible] Dated *August* [illegible] *Letter*, Dated *August* 28. 1698. [illegible] *October*, *fixt for the Day of the Dispute*, [illegible] *Appear*, *we must be judged Insincere and Cowardly*. And all this on your Part, before the *Quakers* wrote their [illegible] *Letter*, Dated *September* the 7th 1698.

ERRATA.

[illegible] *Pricst*.

FINIS.

[illegible] *Quaker's* House, but to S. *Cater* of *Little Port*, in the *Isle of Ely*, for him, and Five more of his Brethren, to come forth, and joyn with your *Minister* and F. *Bugg*, and *Four* more. So now you have done well